



How do we protect both our borders and our ideals?

Overview

Nuclear Reactions: Atomic Diplomacy at the Marin Headlands supplements your unit on the Cold War. Students are introduced to Nike nuclear missile site that operated in the Marin Headlands from the 1950s until the early 1970s. Students can consider the national significance and impact of the Cold War from a local perspective: its definition of security, the technology it spawned, the role of diplomacy, and public perceptions of the era. Your students also can be prompted to conduct research into primary and secondary sources that continue the story of nuclear technology in our political and economic world of today.

Specifically, *Nuclear Reactions* links to the following standards:

California State Education Standards for Social Studies:

Content Standard 11.9

- Students analyze U.S. foreign policy since World War II: Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including the following: Atomic testing in the American West, the “mutual assured destruction” doctrine, and disarmament policies

Performance Standard

- Students explain the desired, and perceived, impact, of the “mutual assured destruction doctrine” on the national consciousness through self-directed study.

Nuclear Reactions encourages Historical and Social Studies Analysis Skills, including historical interpretation in which students show the connections between particular historical events and larger political trends, as well as interpret past events and issues within the context in which the event unfolded. Students hone their skills in working collectively and respecting the opinions of others.



"I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." Albert Einstein

Introduce the topic of the Nike nuclear missile site once your class already has developed a working knowledge of the factors that contributed to the Cold War and the practice of Atomic Diplomacy.

Pre-visit Classroom Lesson

How do competing ideologies co-exist?

Summary

Students work in groups to define and explain a term from the Cold War. Students individually interview someone who lived through the Cold War. Students share interviews. Students watch a short DVD to introduce them to the Nike missile site.

Materials

Primary or secondary sources in the Internet
Nuclear Reactions (DVD)

Activity One – Homework Assignment

Prepare your students for the park visit with a two-part homework assignment:

1. Form small groups. Each group will be assigned a term from the Cold War to define and explain. They can conduct a simple search on the Internet. The group comes to consensus on a definition and explanation. The suggested terms are:
 - MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction)
 - Ban the Bomb movement
 - Space race to the moon
 - HUAC
 - Civil Defense
 - Proxy Wars
 - Boris and Natasha
2. Ask your students to conduct a short interview with someone who lived through the Cold War. Ask them to pose the following questions:
What do you remember about the Cold War?
How did the Cold War affect you?



Activity Two – Classroom Discussion

1. Have each group share their research with the class to have a common vocabulary and understanding of the terms from the Cold War.
2. Ask students to share highlights from their interviews. Have them reflect on their experiences:
Are there common threads throughout the experiences?
How do these threads relate to our experiences today?

Activity Three – Nuclear Reactions DVD

1. Explain that the class will be visiting a Nike nuclear missile site which has been restored to appear from the Cuban missile crisis era of the Cold War. Invite students to record any questions they may have. Collect the questions to bring to the park visit.



National Park Field Session

Summary

Students are welcomed by NPS staff and provided with the basic safety rules. NPS staff facilitates a short dialogue about issues inherent in the relationship between national security and personal freedom. Working in small groups, students then conduct their own inquiry in designated areas of the Nike site. Students record their observations and inferences. They pose informational and critical thinking questions. The class then has the opportunity to engage in a Q&A session with NPS staff.

Post-visit Classroom Assessment

Summary

Teacher receives post-visit reflection sheet at the end of the park visit. The sheet contains two questions for each student to respond. Please have the students complete the sheet and return them to the park in the stamped envelope provided.

The two questions are:

1. What do you feel is the enduring meaning (or symbol) of the Cold War?
2. How did your visit to the park help you think about the Cold War?



Post-Visit Classroom Lessons

1. Dissonant Vistas

Summary

Teacher presents *Dissonant Vistas* power point. Students consider what contradictions exist in the Nike landscape. Students write short essay.

Materials

Dissonant Vistas power point

Student field notes

Activity

1. Students take a few minutes reviewing their field notes – “My impressions of the Nike site.” This can be done individually or in their small groups.
2. Teacher then engages students in *Dissonant Vistas* power point, generating a class discussion of the contradictions that exist in the Nike landscape.
3. Students are asked to write a short essay – “Are there contradictions in *your* community landscape?” Or, “How can a discussion of the contradictions found in local military landscapes aid in historical research?”

2. Where are we today?

Summary

Students use the Nike site and its technology as a springboard to researching related issues of nuclear technology today.

Materials

Annotated list of related web sites

Internet access

Investigation

1. Working individually or in pairs, students pose a question about nuclear technology that is of interest to them. They can use the annotated list of related web sites as their first resource.
2. Students identify their primary and secondary sources.
3. Students prepare an essay and/or class presentation showcasing their results.
4. Students facilitate a discussion with their classmates about their research.



3. What is the meaning of historic monuments?

Summary

Students consider the meaning of historic monuments and National Historic Landmarks. They discuss the Nike site as a monument to the Cold War and determine if they believe an alternative site would better represent the era.

Materials

National Historic Landmark information sheet

NPS website – www.nps.gov includes an extensive section on National Historic Landmarks and other significant cultural resources.

Investigation

1. Students form small groups.
2. They list historic landmarks, monuments, or icons that symbolize United States history and culture. They explain why these monuments were preserved or built.
3. Students consider why the Nike missile site was preserved.
4. The class discusses whether the Nike missile site is the best site to commemorate the Cold War. They can propose an alternative site (s) that best represents the era.



National Historic Landmarks

National Historic Landmarks make tangible the American experience. They are places where significant historical events occurred, where prominent Americans worked or lived, that represent those ideas that shaped the nation, that provide important information about our past, or that are outstanding examples of design or construction.

Preserving historic properties as important reflections of the heritage of the United States became a national policy through passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906, the Historic Sites Act of 1935, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of these recognized properties, and is maintained and expanded by the National Park Service.

The National Register's standards for evaluating the significance of properties were developed to recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have made a contribution to United States history and heritage.

The criteria say that the site, building, structure, objects, landscape or district must possess a quality of significance in American history and:

- Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a period, type, or method of construction that represent the work of a master; or
- Have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in history.